Introduction

The purpose of this research is to define and explore the key factors influencing the buying decisions of professionals who utilized shop tools and equipment for automotive repairs. It is intended to collect and benchmark data on tools and equipment purchasing decisions made by those who use them in their repair shops. The report contains an analysis of the major factors driving the purchasing decisions by those who use tools and equipment in their shops. Key influential factors for tools include warranty, recommendations by other technicians and brand preference.

This report intends to help buyers make informed and strategic decisions when buying products.

According to Lang Marketing Resources, Inc., in 2017, Do-It-Yourself (DIY), consumers and professional repair shops purchased $6 billion in tools and $4.7 billion-worth of equipment. Furthermore, in a five-year period from 2012 to 2017, tool and equipment sales both experienced annual growth rates of 3.8 percent.

The *Purchasing Trends Study - Tools and Equipment 2018* is a survey-based research publication directed by the Auto Care Association's Tool and Equipment Committee. This publication concludes that repair shops' tool purchasing decisions remain largely driven by the desire for warranty first, then by recommendations of other technicians and strong brand name following close behind. In 2017, (and for the fifth year in a row), the mobile tool vendor was the supplier most frequently used for tool purchases. The full line parts jobber and internet sellers, along with manufacturers were the next most frequently used suppliers.

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Methodology

The primary method of gathering data for this project was a web-based survey, conducted between Oct. 10 and Oct. 23, 2017. The survey sample was drawn from two distinct populations of tools and equipment purchasing decision-makers who are subscribers of Babcox's publications.

A combined survey on tools and equipment was sent to the participants. Screening questions were included in the survey questionnaire to separate professionals who *purchased* tools from those who *influenced* equipment purchases.

Over two hundred participants viewed and answered all survey questions. Tools purchasers comprised 133 of those who completed the survey, while 99 respondents accounted for professionals who purchased equipment for use in their shops.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 20 close-ended questions in which respondents were offered a set of answers and asked to choose. Rating-format questions consisted of five-point rating Likert scales. This rating measured the intensity of responses to certain questions. Descriptive statistical method was used to analyze the data.

Margin of error reflects the reliability of survey data. A 95 percent confidence level gives a range of confidence to which a response accurately represents a given population from which the sample was drawn.

The margin of error for this survey is ± 0.3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that we are 95 percent confident that the response is accurate to within plus or minus 0.3 percentage points of what would be found had the entire population of Babcox Media publication subscribers been surveyed.

For example, 55.6 percent of respondents indicated that they found competitive tool pricing online instead of jobbers or distributors. With a margin error of ± 0.3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level, we are 95 percent certain that the actual percentage of decision-makers in the population of Babcox magazine subscribers who shop online for competitive tool pricing is between 55.3 percent and 55.9 percent.

The report is divided into two segments. The first part of the report presents data analyses for tool purchasing respondents, the second is devoted to equipment purchasing decision-makers. Data analyses and tables are shown for all respondents and are also cross-tabulated by respondents' employment roles.

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